

The Circumstances of the Jewish
People an Argument for the
Truth of the Christian Religion.

THREE ^{693.e.1}
DISCOURSES²
ON
ROMANS XI. II.

By NATHANIEL LARDNER.



L O N D O N:

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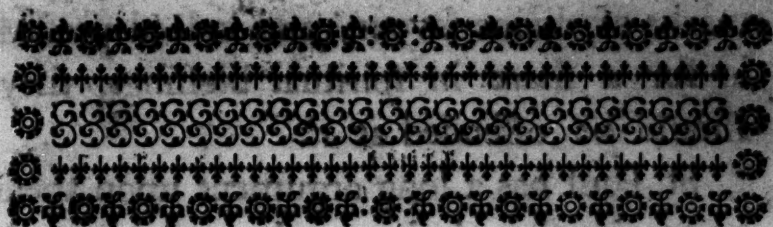
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ROM. XI. II.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentils, for to provoke them to jealousy.



IN this context the Apostle discourseth of an affecting scene of things, the reception of the Gentils, and the rejection of the Jews; the former a just occasion of much joy, the later of like grief and concern; that they, who had been long favored and distinguished by religious privileges, should fall from them; and, when others received

Disc.
I.

A 2

marke

DISC. marks of divine favour, and indeed pressed
 I. in for a share in spiritual blessings, they
 should be offended at it.

St. Paul has a long argument upon these points in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of this epistle to the Romans. He enters upon it at the begining of the ninth chapter in these words: *I say the truth in Christ, and lye not, my conscience also bearing me witnesse in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heavinesse, and continual sorrow of heart. For I could wish: I am almost ready to wish: For he does not say, that he actually wisheth it: For I could wish,* says he, *that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glorie, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. And it concludes with a pious acknowledgement, and humble adoration of the wisdom and equity of divine providence; though these and other events in this world appear to us, for a time, strange and surprising. O the*

by the Estate of the Jews.

5

the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out!—For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To whom be glorie for ever.

Dise.

I.

My chief design at this time is to observe some advantages, which Christians have in their argument for the truth of their religion, from the present afflictive circumstances, and low estate of the Jewish people and nation.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? As if the Apostle had sayd:

“ But by this their present rejection,
“ which I have been speaking of, do I
“ intend to say, that they have so stumbled,
“ as to fall; that is, so as never to
“ rise again, and never to be again restored
“ to prosperous circumstances, as
“ a people?”

Or, according to another interpretation; “ Do I by what I have sayd intend to intimate, that all of them
“ should fall, and none believe, and
“ partake of the blessings of the Messiah’s

6 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. "siah's kingdom, and the divine fa-

I. "your?"

God forbid: or, which would be better, and more proper; *By no means*, or *Far be it*: for the name of God never is in the original phrase, by which this emphatical negative is expressed. "No, "by no means: that is not the case, "that none of the natural posterity of "Jacob should believe, and come into "the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom."

But through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentils, to provoke them unto jealousy. "But by the Jewish people now "generally rejecting the Messiah, it has "so happened, that salvation has been "conveyed unto the Gentils. And herein "there is not only a benefit to them, in "their salvation, but also to the Jews. "For by the Gentils embracing the gospel "proposed to them, and coming to partake of religious privileges, the Jewish "people will be provoked to emulation: "more of them will now believe, and "be accepted of God, than if the gospel

“ pel had not been preached to and re- **Disc.**
“ ceived by the Gentils.” **I.**

“ When therefore I speak, as I have
“ done, concerning the offense taken by
“ the Jews against Jesus and his gospel,
“ and concerning the divine displeasure
“ against them upon that account; I
“ do not intend to insinuate, that the
“ posterity of Jacob are totally and abso-
“ lutely excluded; or to deny, that such
“ of them, who now, or at any time
“ hereafter shall believe, will be received
“ and approved.”

The sense I have given of this text
is confirmed by what the Apostle says
at the begining of this chapter, where
also, in the course of his argument, he
has these like words: *I say then, has Rom.xi.i.*
God cast away his people? By no means.
For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of
Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. “ I
“ reckon myself a proof to the contrarie,
“ and that God is willing to receive any
“ of his ancient people the Jews, who
“ believe in Jesus, and obey the revelation
“ made by him.” Then instancing in
the number of true Israelites, servants
and

8. *The Christian Religion confirmed*

Disc. and worshipers of God in the time of


I. *Elijah, no less than seven thousand; though the apostasie was so general, that*

Rom.xi.5. Elijah thought he was left alone, he adds: Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Indeed the Jewish people by generally rejecting the gospel of Christ, preached to them with divine authority, had generally excluded themselves from the privileges of God's people, having refused to accept the blessings offered to them. What then should be done? Was the Messiah of God to have no people, when the Jews rejected him? It was not fit. Since therefore they now shew great reluctance to that kind proposal, the gospel shall be preached to the Gentils, who will hear and receive it. And when they have received it, they will be of use to the Jewish people. For they will *provoke them to jealousy*, and all good men among them will be disposed to receive the Messiah, and from time to time will be brought into his kingdom: till at length, possibly, there shall be a general con-

by the Estate of the Jews.

9

conversion of them, and that very much Disc.
owing to the profession of true religion I.
made by Gentils. So the fall of the Jews 
has been the Gentils salvation: The Jews
rejecting the Messiah hastened the preach-
ing of the gospel to the Gentils. And
the Gentils receiving and maintaining the
gospel will provoke the Jews to emula-
tion, and excite them to receive it, that
they also may partake in the divine
favour and the marks of it.

So the Apostle argues in this and fol-
lowing verses: *But through their fall sal-* Rom. xi:
11, 15
vation is come unto the Gentils, to provoke
them unto jealousy. Now if the fall of them
be the riches of the world, and the diminishing
of them the riches of the Gentils, how much
more their fulnesse? that is, their general con-
version, or a more numerous conversion of
them, than has yet been. For I speak unto you,
Gentils, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the
Gentils. I magnify mine office. If by any
means I may provoke to emulation them which
are my flesh, and might save some of them.
For if the casting away of them be the re-
conciling of the world, what shall the re-

Bceiving

10 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. *ceiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

I. *Again: For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mysterie, (lest that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulnesse of the Gentils be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.—*

✱ 30, 32. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercie through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercie they also may obtain mercie. For God has concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercie upon all.

There are therefore two things spoken of in these and divers other verses of this chapter: An advantage accruing to the Gentils through the unbelief and rejection of the Jews: An advantage accruing to the Jews through the belief and reception of the Gentils.

It is the first point chiefly, upon which I shall insist, and in the following method.

I. I shall

by the Estate of the Jews.

II

Disc.

I.

- I. I shall observe the present state of things, with regard to Christians, the followers of Jesus, and the Jews who reject him.
- II. I shall shew, what advantages Christians have in the argument for the truth of their religion from the present state of things in the world.
- III. I intend to mention some remarks and observations upon this subject.

I. In the first place I would observe the present state of things in the world, both with regard to Christians, the followers of Jesus, and the Jews who reject him.

And the case is very obvious, such as every one is able to perceive, upon a little thought and consideration.

There are now great numbers of men in the world, in various kingdoms, states and governments, in countreys near and afar off, professing faith in Jesus as the Christ, who are not the natural descendents of Abraham and the ancient Patriarchs.

DISC.

I.



These people called Christians, of Gentile stock and original, declare themselves worshipers of the one living and true God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God, who delivered the law by Moses, and often spake unto the children of Israel by the Prophets.

And as they are worshipers of the one true God, they are likewise free from all that kind of idolatry, which once prevailed universally in the world, and into which the Jewish people themselves formerly were often seduced and perverted. They worship not, as Gods, the sun, or the moon, or the stars; nor Baal, nor Saturn, nor any other of the Gods of the people of the East, or of the Egyptians, or of the Greeks and Romans, or of any of the countreys of the Barbarians in the northern parts of the world.

Nor are they only worshipers of the one living and true God, the God of the people of Israel, but they also receive the scriptures of the Old Testament, delivered in a succession of ages, at divers times,
to

to the descendents of Abraham and Israel. **DISC.**
They believe them to be the writings of **I.**
men, animated and inspired by the Spirit
of God, and have them in equal ve-
neration with the Jewish people them-
selves.

Moreover they highly respect and ho-
nor not only the Patriarchs and Moses and
the Prophets, but likewise all the worthies
of the ancient dispensation, who walked
with God, and in the main were upright
in his sight, and stedfast in his cove-
nant.

These Christian people differ indeed
from the Jews in receiving a person as a
great and eminent Prophet, whom the
Jews reject. But yet their regard for that
Prophet, whom they call the Christ, or
the Messiah, is very much owing to their
respect for those ancient scriptures, in
which they think he is foretold and pro-
mised.

And though they do not conform to all
the ordinances of the law of Moses, they al-
low and believe his law and his whole
institution to have been of divine appoint-
ment,

DISC. ment, and wisely designed, and of great

I. use, as the state of things in the world then was, And with chearfulnesse and zeal they assert and maintain against all opposers the divine authority of that dispensation. They are likewise sometimes almost compelled to wonder, that the Jewish people of old, who had such a law, should forsake God, and depart from his worship, so often as they did.

And, which is very considerable, they do not make void the law of Moses, but establish it. For their religion strictly requires obedience to all the moral laws of righteousness and true holiness therein delivered, and upon which the greatest stress is there laid : which righteousness is so elegantly and copiously taught and recommended in the books of Job, the Psalms, and the Proverbs ; in comparison of which the later Prophets openly declared ritual observances to be of little value, and without it useless and offensive. Inso-much that the substance of the Christian religion is no other, than what has been accounted true religion by Moses, and the
the

the Prophets, by all the righteous men, and Disc.
wise and pious Princes, that ever were. I.

This is what is inculcated in their religious assemblies, and enforced from the consideration of everlasting rewards and punishments in a future state; more forcible motives, than the hope or fear of temporal rewards and penalties in the present life.

Nor do they neglect to improve the instances of faith and piety recorded in the Old Testament: though more especially they dwell upon the shining example of perfect virtue in the life and death of Jesus, their great lord and master.

Phil. iii. 3.

As hereby men are trained up in great numbers to true and eminent virtue, they cannot but look upon themselves as the true Israel, *who worship God in the spirit, and* Rom. viii.
have no confidence in unneccessarie, ritual 4.
appointments. And the righteousness, principally required in the law, is better fulfilled by them who have the religion of Jesus, than it was by those who had only the institution of Moses.

And indeed the religion of Christians is that of Abraham, according to which
he

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Disc. he was justified, without the peculiarities
I. of the law of Moses. And it is a character, which they are pleased with, and boast of, that through Jesus Christ they are become, according to the spirit, the children of faithful Abraham; and are justified and accepted of God as he was.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, that as the disciples and followers of Jesus do not take upon them the yoke of the ritual ordinances of the law of Moses, as necessarie to salvation; so neither have they introduced any other like ordinances in their stead. At lest they profess, that Jesus, whom they own for the Messiah, has no such ordinances in his religion: excepting two only, both plain and simple; one initiatorie to a profession of faith in him, and of obedience to his law; the other commemorative of his love, who freely layd down his life, though spotless and innocent, as a testimonie to the truth of that important doctrine, which he had taught and recommended to mankind.

These are the followers of Jesus. These are Christians, who now do, and for a long

long time have flourished, and been numerous and considerable. **Disc.**

I.

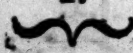
In the next place we are to observe the state of the Jews, the natural posterity of Jacob, who reject Jesus, and do not allow him to be the Messiah, the great Prophet and deliverer, foretold and promised in many parts, and in almost every book of the Old Testament.

They also are in great numbers, some in almost every province and kingdom of the known world. They are numerous, but not a people. They have a being, but they dwell not in the land of Canaan, which had been given them for an inheritance. They have no power and authority, no empire, no civil government, scarce † a right and privilege to possess the smallest tract or territory of land in any part of the world.

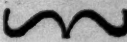
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Nor

† *If they have a right to purchase and possess lands of inheritance in some places, I suppose in but a few only, and there by some special favour and indulgence.*

DISC. Nor have they any temple. For their
I.  stately temple, once glorious in outward appearance, still more glorious for the especial presence of the Divine Majesty, and the frequent manifestations he there made of himself; the temple, I say, where their tribes were to assemble, where alone, according to the law of Moses, sacrifices were to be offered, is in ruins, or rather is no more; without any traces of it remaining, but the remembrance of the place where it once was.

Other tokens of the divine favour are also wanting. They have not the Urim and Thummim of the priesthood, nor any vision, or prophecie, nor voice or word from God to direct or comfort them. Prophecie and vision, in ancient times frequent, or even constant, are now not only rare and uncommon, but altogether unknown among them. Learned Rabbis, and traditionarie teachers they may have. But what Prophet can they boast of, as theirs, since the time of Jesus; who truly was a Prophet mighty in word and deed, and,
as

as we say, the looked for and promised Disc.
Messiah, but despised and crucified by I.
them? 

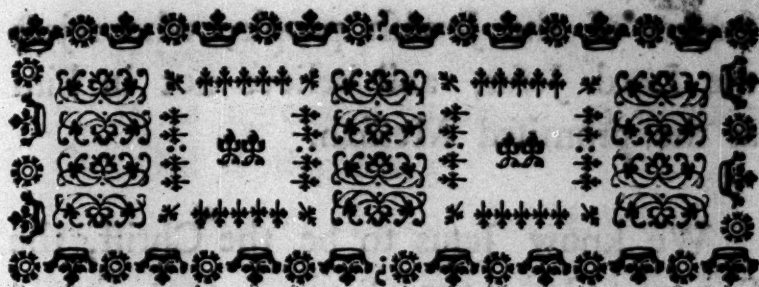
Such is the state of things in the world,
with regard to Christians, the followers
of Jesus, and the Jews, who reject him.



19
of the Estate of the
as we for the first time for and personal
Mellish, but departed and conveyed by
them?

Each of the first of the world
with regard to Christian the followers
of Jesus and the Jews who reject him

R. O. M.



ROM. XI. II.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentils, for to provoke them to jealousy.

II.



AM now in the second place, as formerly proposed, to shew, what advantages Christians have

DISC.

II.

in the argument for the truth of their religion, from this state of things, and particularly from the afflictive circumstances

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DISC. stances of the Jewish people, who reject
II. the Lord Jesus, and believe not in him
as the promised Messiah.

We know Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour that should come into the world, from the fulfilment of many ancient prophecies in his person and ministrie, from the consideration of the perfection and excellence of his doctrine, the unspoted purity and holiness of his life, the proofs he gave of wonderful knowledge and understanding; from his many miraculous works, his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, and from the mighty works done by his Apostles and others, preaching to Jews and Gentils, in his name, and under his authority.

Beside all this, we have, as I apprehend, a great advantage in the argument for the truth of our religion from that state of things, which was formerly taken notice of. And I shall now endeavor to shew it under the following particulars.

I. It

1. It was foretold by our Lord.
2. It is agreeable to many prophecies in the Old Testament.
3. The present state of the Jewish people affords reason to believe, that the Messiah is already come.
4. The time and circumstances of the present captivity and dispersion of the Jewish people are an argument for the truth of the Christian religion.
5. The subsistence of the Jewish people to this time affords an attestation to divers things, upon which some evidences of the Christian religion depend.

1. *This state of things, with regard both to Jews and Gentils, was foretold by our Lord.* And, as the event has been agreeable to what he sayd long ago, it shews, that he was a Prophet. It also demonstrates the truth and justnesse of all his claims; not only, that he came from God, but that he was the Christ, as he sayd.

When the centurion had expressed a remarkable faith in the power of our Lord, to heal his sick servant at a distance,

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DISC. stance, he sayd to them that followed: I

II. have not found so great faith, no not in
 Mat. viii. Israel. And I say unto you, that many
 10--12. shall come from the east and the west,

and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. See also Luke xiii. 29. How unlikely was this! How little prospect was there at that time, that great numbers of Gentils in all quarters of the world, should believe in God and his Christ, whom he had sent! But yet that saying of our Lord has been abundantly fulfilled. The truth of his words appeared soon after, and they have been fulfilling to this day.

The reception of the Gentils, with the dislike and resentment of the Jewish people, is evidently represented in the parable of the prodigal son, who upon his repentance is most kindly received by the father: but the elder son, meaning the Jewish people, the natural posterity of Jacob, is offended, and will not come in.

The rejection of the Jewish people, who had been long barren and unfruitful to a great degree, and were still likely

to neglect the best means of improvement, DISC.
is set before them by our Lord very intel- II.
ligibly, though with as little offense as
might be, which is agreeable to all the
rules both of wisdom and goodnesse.

*He spake also this parable, says the Evan- Luke xiii.
gelist: A certain man had a figtree planted* 6. 7.
*in his vineyard, that is, in some enclosed
spot of ground, where it was well situated
and defended. And he came, and sought
fruit, and found none. Then sayd he unto
the dresser of the vineyard: Behold these
three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-
tree, and find none. Cut it down, why
cumbreth it the ground?*

And in like manner in some other para-
bles, representing their great and imminent
danger of ruin, and also setting forth
the justnesse and fitnessse of the sentence
to be pronounced upon them, if they
should not repent; if they should still
continue unfruitful after enjoying the best
means of improvement, and should withal
oppose and abuse the messengers of God
sent from time to time to warn and reclaim
them. *Then began he to speak unto the people* Luk. xx;
9.—16,
this parable: A certain man planted a vine-

D

yard,

26 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. yard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went

II. into a far countrey.—And at the season he

sent a servant unto the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard. But the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. In like manner did they unto others, who were sent unto them. At length the lord of the vineyard sent his son. But him they cast out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He will come and destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. Compare Matth. xxi. 33.—41.

Our blessed Lord, all whose other miracles were healing and beneficent, with a view to the advantage of that people, if by any means they might be alarmed and perswaded, constrained himself to speak one word of malediction, a sentence of condemnation upon a barren figtree, and with surprizing effect. He was going

Mat. xxi. 19. to Jerusalem. And when he saw a figtree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and sayd unto it: Let no fruit grow on thee hence-

henceforward forever. And presently the *figtree* withered away. A miracle that was emblematical and prophetical, signifying the affecting and speedie ruin and desolation of the Jewish nation, if they out-fined the day of tryal allotted them, and persisted to neglect and abuse the means of salvation afforded them.

DISC.
II.

We have in our Lord's discourses divers predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it. And the event has shewn the truth of his prophetical character.

It should be also observed by us, that those predictions were publicly spoken in the hearing of many people, not of the disciples only. And they were delivered with such marks of affection and tender-
ness, and contained so distinct and so moving a description of impending calamities, that nothing could have been better suited and adapted to prevent them, by inducing men to repent. And if they did not repent, he assured them, that *then would be great tribulation, such as was* Mat. xxiv. *not since the begining of the world to that* 21. *time, no nor ever shall be.* And when he

DISC. was led away to be crucified, and there

II. followed him a great company of people, and
 Luk. xxiii. of women, who also bewailed him and la-
 26. 31. mented him, Jesus turning unto them sayd :

Daughters of Jerusalem, Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.—For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

And we plainly perceive by his words, that the desolation, which he foresaw, would be of a long duration, as we also see in the event: Which added to his concern for that people. It was not a single judgement, a calamity of one day, though great and terrible, but a long scene of affliction and darknesse, which he foretold and bewailed. And

Luke xix.
 41. 42.

when he was come nigh, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they

Mat. xxiii.
 37. 38.

are hid from thine eyes. And, How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Once more,

Then

Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it, meaning the city of Jerusalem, depart out, and let not them that are in the countrey enter therein. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.— For there shall be great distresse in the land, and much wrath upon this people, And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be troden down of the Gentils, until the times of the Gentils be fulfilled.

The great and punctual accomplishment of these and other words of our Lord, concerning the sad ruin, the wide dispersion and long captivity of the Jewish people, afford a strong argument for the truth of the Christian religion, and assure us, that Jesus spoke with divine authority, and that the doctrine taught by him, and contained in the New Testament, the writings of his Apostles, and their faithful companions, is true and of God.

DISC.

II.

2. *The state of things, formerly observed, is also conformable to ancient prophecies found in the books of Moses and other parts of the Old Testament.*

In those books are contained prophecies of the general conversion of the nations of the earth to the acknowledgement and service of the one living and true God, delivered, when the worship of God was confined to the one nation of the Jews alone, or to a few men only, their patriarchs and ancestors, and a very small number besides. The way or means, by which this blessing should be conveyed to the world, was also intimated. To Abraham it was declared, that in him, that
 Gen.xii.3. is, through him and his posterity, all nations, or families of the earth should be blessed. That confines the accomplishment of the promise to his familie: Some one or more of which must be the author, or authors and instruments of this general blessing. The same promise is solemnly renewed to Jacob. Afterwards there were prophecies delivered, containing limitations and restrictions, relating to the tribe of
 Judah,

Gen.
xxviii. 14.

Judah, and the familie of David. The Disc.
descendents of Abraham in general, or II.
many of them, may some way contribute
to this design. But the tribe of Judah
and the familie of David are often spoken
of with special regard. In Isaiah particu-
larly, it is foretold; *there shall come forth* ^{Isa. xi. 1.}
a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch
shall grow out of his roots.—In that day
there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall
stand for an ensign to the people, to it shall
the Gentils seek. Again, I will give thee ^{Isa. xlix. 6.}
for a light to the Gentils, that thou mayest
be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.
And it is out of the tribe of Judah, and
the familie of David, that our Lord arose.
And by him, as is manifest, the know-
ledge of God has been spread over the
earth, and the promise made to Abra-
ham, that *in him all the families of the*
earth should be blessed, has been fulfilled.

But beside this there are intimations
given in the Old Testament, that when
this event should happen, the Jewish peo-
ple would be in some circumstances,
which are disadvantageous.

Observ-

DISC. Observable are the words of our Lord,

II. when he foretells the destruction of Jerusalem. *For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written*

Luke xxi.
22.

may be fulfilled. It is not improbable, that our Lord has here an especial reference to some prophecies in the book of Daniel, relating particularly to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, which he foresaw, and was then speaking of. But he might also have an eye to some other parts of Scripture. And we may without much difficulty perceive divers things sayd in the Old Testament, which are propheticall not only of the destruction of Jerusalem, but likewise of the long captivity and dispersion, which were to ensue.

Gen. xlix.
8.

Jacob foretelling the condition of his posterity in future times says: *Judah, thou art he, whom thy brethren shall praise. Thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies, thy father's children shall bow down unto thee.* The tribe of Judah, as we find from the historie of the people of Israel, usually had some distinction among the rest. At length David and his descendants,

scendents, who were of that tribe, sat ^{Disc.} upon the throne of government among ^{H.} them. And from Judah the kingdom of the two tribes was called. And indeed from that tribe all Israelites in general were stiled Jews.

It follows in the place just cited: *The Gen. xlix. sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shi-^{10.}loh come. And unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* The sense of which prophecie may be briefly taken in this manner: “ The ++ royal power and
“ authority, which shall be established
“ in the posterity of Judah, shall not
“ be taken from them; or at lest they
“ shall not be destitute of rulers and
“ governours; no, not when they are in
“ a declining condition, until the com-
“ ing of the Messiah: But when he is
“ come, there shall be no distinction be-
“ tween the Jews, and other nations, who
“ shall be obedient to the Messiah. And
“ after that the posterity of Judah and
“ people of the Jews shall have neither
“ King, nor ruler of their own, but the
E “ com-

++ See Patrick upon the place.

34 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. "commonwealth of Judah shall lose all

II. "form of civil government and authority."

This we know to have happened about the time of our Saviour's coming. From David to the Babylonish captivity that tribe held the sceptre for several ages. After seventy years captivity the Jews returned to Judea, or the land of Canaan, where they lived again according to their own laws. Their temple was rebuilt, and they sacrificed and worshiped there, for the most part, with great freedom, according to the appointments of the law of Moses. They were a distinct people, and had among them civil government and authority. But at the time of our Lord's birth, and afterwards, they were in some measure subject to the Romans. And the Jewish power and authority declined, till it was quite abolished and overthrown by the Emperours, Vespasian and Titus, about forty years after our Lord's ascension. And so it has been to this day.

Moses assured the people of Israel:
 Deut. xviii. 15. *The Lord thy God will raise thee up a Pro-*

phet

phet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me. Unto him shall ye hearken. And God himself sayd to Moses: DISC. II.

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. Deut. xviii. 18. 19.

Some understand this to be an expresse prophetic concerning the Messiah himself, that great Prophet, who would be in an especial manner like unto Moses. Others have supposed it to be a promise of a constant succession of Prophets among them.

Allow this last to be the meaning, it implies a command to hear Jesus, if he was a Prophet; and a threatening of punishment, if he was not heard and obeyed. And that Jesus was a Prophet, is evident from testimonials surpassing not only those given to other Prophets among them, but even to Moses himself. Consequently disobedience to him was a thing, for which God would certainly reckon with them.

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DISC. I shall cite a passage or two more out

II. of later Prophets. In Daniel it is sayd:

~
Dan. ix. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy peo-
24.—27. ple, and upon thy holy city, to finish the
transgressions, and to make an end of sins,
and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and
to bring in everlasting righteousness, and
to seal up vision and prophecie, and to
anoint the most holy. Know therefore and
understand, that from the going forth of
the commandment to restore and to rebuild
Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the prince,
shall be seven weeks. And threescore and two
weeks the street shall be built again, and
the wall, even in troublous times. And
after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah
be cut off, but not for himself. And the
people of the prince that shall come shall de-
stroy the city and the sanctuary, and the
end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto
the end of the war desolations are determined.
And he shall confirm the covenant with
many for one week, and in the midst of the
week he shall cause the sacrifice and the
oblation to cease. And for the overspread-
ing of abomination he shall make it desolate,
even until the consummation, and that de-

ter-

terminated shall be poured upon the desolate. DISC. II.

Here is a promise made to Daniel, that the city of Jerusalem with it's temple should be rebuilt; and that they should for some while there worship and serve God, as we know they did after the return from Babylon. And here is a promise of the appearing of the Messiah, and a prediction of great desolations afterwards: which also we know to have happened soon after the time of Jesus, who was a great Prophet, and anointed of God in a most extraordinarie manner, and was generally rejected by the people, to whom Daniel belonged, and to whom he prophesied.

In Malachi, the last of the Prophets of the Old Testament, are these words:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight. Behold, he shall come, sayth the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand, when he appears? For he is Mal. iii. 1.—3.

DISC. *is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.*

II. *And he shall sit as a refiner of silver. And afterwards: For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble. And the day that cometh shall burn them up, sayth the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings, and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked, and they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, sayth the Lord of hosts.*

*Mal. iv.
1.—3.*

Certainly these are not insignificant words in the mouth of the Prophet. And these emphatical expressions do evidently appear to relate to a great person, who should come among the Jews, whilst their temple was standing: whereas their temple was destroyed, and they were led into captivity soon after the time of Jesus, our Lord.

John the Baptist, who well understood these prophecies, and knew his own character,

rafter, says therefore: *And now also the* **Disc.**
axe is layd to the root of the trees. Every **II.**
tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is **Mat. iii.**
hewn down, and cast into the fire. I in- **10. 11.**
deed baptize you with water unto repentance.
But he that cometh after me is mightier
than I.—Whose fan is in his hand, and he
will thoroughly purge his floor. He will
gather his wheat into the garner, but will
burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

And Simeon, who when he saw the
 child Jesus at the temple, doubted not
 but he was the Lord's Christ, and spoke
 of him as such, and that he was *a light* **Luk. ii. 32**
to lighten the Gentils, and the glorie of
God's people Israel, sayed to Marie his
 mother: *This child is set for the fall and* **—34—**
rising of many in Israel.

The conversion of the Gentils, then,
 and the low condition of the Jewish peo-
 ple, are not only agreeable to prophecies
 of the Lord Jesus, but likewise to many
 ancient prophecies contained in the books
 of the Old Testament.†

3. The

† *If any should find this discourse too long for a single
 reading, here is a proper resting place.*

DISC.

II.

3. *The present state of the Jewish people, particularly their afflictive circumstances, afford good reason to believe, that the Messiah, the great person spoken of in the Old Testament, but still wished for and expected by them, is already come.*

For the prophecies concerning him speak of his being of the tribe of Judah, and familie of David. He must appear therefore, whilst the registers of their tribes and families are in being. But now they are lost. If any one should now arise, claiming that great character; it could not be known what tribe he was of, and therefore there could not be any good assurance, that his claim was just.

And this is an advantage in the argument for the truth of the Christian religion. For we know, that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, and familie of David. But since the long captivity and numerous dispersions and removals of the Jewish people from one place to another, oftentimes under the greatest difficulties, it is impossible, that their registers should be
pre-

by the Estate of the Jews.

41

preserved, or the families of particular persons be known.

Dr sc.
II.

Another thing clearly intimated by the later Prophets of the Old Testament is, that the Messiah should come during the time of the temple built after the return from Babylon. God was pleased, by the Prophet Haggai, to encourage the people to go on in rearing up the temple after this manner: *Thus sayth the Lord of hosts, Yet once more, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. And I will fill this house with glorie, sayth the Lord of hosts.* Hagg. ii. 4. 5. Again, *The glorie of this later house shall be greater than that of the former, sayth the Lord of hosts.* — 1. 9.

That temple wanted some things, which were in the temple built by Solomon; particularly, the symbol of the divine presence, the cloud of glorie overshadowing the mercie seat. By the greater glorie of the later house therefore seems to be meant the appearance of the Messiah, who is Emmanuel, or God with us: in whom the Deity dwelt and manifested

F

himself

42 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. himself in a peculiar manner : by which
 II. means alone, that is, by whose presence
 alone, this second temple could be rendred
 more glorious than the former.

The coming of the Messiah to that temple is also promised in Malachi before quoted. *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight. Behold, he shall come, sayth the Lord of hosts.*

Mal. iii. i.

Since therefore the temple, where the promised messenger of so great eminence and distinction was to appear, is now no more, but has long since been destroyed, and continues to be in ruins ; we are assured, that he is already come. For it is impossible for God to fail, or that he should alter the purpose he has so solemnly pronounced and declared.

Have any of the promises or threatenings delivered by the Prophets failed of accomplishment? Did not the posterity of Jacob descend into Egypt, a few in number? And were they not brought thence again, a great host, by mighty power and

an

an outstretched arm, at the time before DISC.
appointed and promised? II.

Were not the threatenings with regard to Saul, David, Solomon, accomplished? Were not the threatenings concerning the ten tribes, and the tribe of Judah, fulfilled? Were not the former, the ten tribes, sent into captivity, and scattered, so as to return no more?

And when the kingdom of Judah took not warning by the judgements inflicted upon the kingdom of Israel, the threatened captivity was brought upon them. And the promise of their return from Babylon was also wonderfully and punctually accomplished. They settled again in the land of Israel, they were encreased and multiplied, and became once more a great people. The temple, which had been layd waste, was raised up, and it's worship restored, according as God had before sayd by his holy Prophets.

Why then should it be thought by any, that the promise concerning the coming of the Messiah to that temple should not be performed? It must have been fulfilled. *The desire of all nations* did

DISC. come to that temple, and the nations

II. have received him, and believed on him,
 John i. 16. and have partaken of his fulness. They

have received grace for grace. They have gained through him the knowledge of the one living and true God. He is their God, and they are his people. They worship him in spirit and truth, And the law of Moses, introduced since the Abrahamic covenant, and ordained for a time only, as to all it's unnecessarie and burdensome appointments, is no longer in force, or of any use unto them.

4. *The time and circumstances of the present captivity and dispersion of the Jewish people afford an argument for the truth of the Christian religion.* For their afflictions appear to have the marks of divine displeasure against them for rejecting and crucifying Jesus, and for persisting to reject him and his Apostles.

Their present afflictions began soon after, and have continued ever since. It was not more than forty years after our Lord's crucifixion, that the people of the Jews underwent the dreadful calamities

lamities of the siege of their city: when also it was taken, and their temple consumed, and they slain, or scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. Disc.
II.

Nor can we avoid observing the estate and condition of this people, the posterity of Abraham, the friend of God; the children of Jacob, whom God preferred to the children of Esau; whom God had chosen to be his people above all the people of the earth: as Moses reminds them in that solemn and pathetic address, at the end of the book of Deuteronomie:

When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Deut.
xxxii. 8, 9!

It is not reasonable to think, that God would carry it unkindly toward them, or stand at a distance from them, without some just ground of offense and provocation.

Moreover we know, that he promised to bless them abundantly, if they hearkened to his Prophets, and walked in the ways he

46 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. he prescribed them; declaring at the same

II. time, that if they were disobedient, he
 ~~~~~  
 Lev. xxvi. would not leave them unpunished: *If ye*

3. *will walk in my statutes, and keep my com-*

—y. 11. *mandments, and do them;—I will set my  
 tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not  
 abhor you. And I will walk with you, and  
 will be your God, and ye shall be my people.*

y. 23. 24. —*But if ye will walk contrarie unto me,  
 then will I also walk contrarie unto you, and*

—y. 27. *will punish you.—And if ye will not for all  
 this hearken unto me, but walk contrarie unto  
 me; then I will walk contrarie unto you  
 in furie, and will chastise you yet seven times  
 for your sins. And his treatment of this  
 people in all ages has been agreeable to  
 these and other like declarations.*

Since therefore this favorite people, so  
 long called by the name of the Lord,  
 and so distinguished by him, are under  
 tokens of divine displeasure; since they  
 are no longer in the land of Canaan, which  
 had been given to them, and lye un-  
 der many disadvantages in the places  
 where they live, there must be some  
 ground and reason of it. And a very likely  
 reason offers, when we consider, as before  
 hinted,

hinted, the time, when the present affliction commenced, even soon after the appearing of Jesus in this world.

DISC.

II.

And we shall be confirmed in the supposition, that this dispersion is owing to their sin in rejecting the Lord Jesus, if we consider farther, when he appeared, and who he was.

He came at the time appointed for the Messiah, when the temple, built after the Babylonish captivity, was in it's glorie, when the registers of their families were in being, and when the Jews themselves and all nations around them were in expectation of such an eminent person.

And must we not think, that since Jesus answered the character of the promised Messiah, or the Lord's anointed, it must be a great and heinous sin to reject and crucify him? If there be any truth in the evangelical historie, (as certainly it is all matter of fact, and but a part only of the great things done by Jesus are there related;) he was a most excellent person, and a most eminent Prophet. Must not any people, the Jews especially, be accountable for such a privilege? Must not their guilt  
in



## 48 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

**DISC.** in rejecting Jesus appear aggravated, when  
**II.** we consider that they crucified him, and  
 repented not; though he rose from the  
 dead, and his Apostles continued a good  
 while afterwards preaching among them?

**Mat. xxvii.** It is also remarkable, that when Jesus  
 25. was condemned as an impostor and male-  
 factor, they imprecated the guilt of his death  
 upon themselves and their children.

And the long continuance of this affli-  
 ction is very striking, so far beyond any  
 thing they had before undergone. And  
 yet they are not guilty of idolatry, as in  
 times past: but all false gods, and all  
 images in worship, are an abomination to  
 them.

**1 Kings** When Solomon consecrated the temple  
**viii. 46.** he had built, he prayed: *If thy people*  
**—50.** *sin against thee, and thou be angrie with*  
*them, and deliver them to the enemy, so*  
*that they carry them captive into the land*  
*of the enemy, far or near: If they shall*  
*bethink themselves, in the land whither they*  
*are carryed captives, saying, we have sined,*  
*and have done perversly, we have committed*  
*wickednesse: And so return unto thee with*  
*all their heart, and with all their soul, in*  
*the*

*the land of their enemies, which led them captive, and pray unto thee:—then bear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people that have sined against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee.*

DISC.  
II.

And long after this Nehemiah, mindfull of the measures, which God had openly declared he would observe with this people, prays after the same manner: O Lord God of heaven, that keepest covenant and mercie with them that love thee;—Remember, I beseech thee, the word which thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations. But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them: though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of heaven, yet I will gather them from thence, and will bring them to the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

Since then they still continue, under many disadvantages, in the dispersion, which began so long ago; it leads us to conclude, that there is some sin they have



50 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. committed, which they have not repented  
 II. of, the guilt of which therefore still lyes  
 heavie upon them.


St. Chrysostom in one of his homilies to his hearers the people of Antioch, discoursing upon this very topic, the long duration of the Jews dispersion and captivity, has this thought: If \* \* \* Jesus had been a malefactor and a deceiver, as the Jews pretended; it might have been honorable, and accounted for righteousness to them, that they put him to death. On the contrarie, since the crucifixion of Jesus, they have been chastised more severely, than when they were guilty of idolatrie, and sacrificed their children to Moloch.

In this long dispersion, of so many ages, it is not unlikely, that divers attempts have been made by them to return into Canaan, and rebuild their temple. And it is well known, that they have formed conspiracies, and made violent attempts to restore their government in the land of Canaan. But they have been always defeated and overthrown.

Designs

\* \* \* *Vid. Chrysost. T. 1. p. 652. 653. Ed. Bened.*



Designs of another kind may have been Disc.  
entred into. One thing is often men- II.  
tioned by ancient historians. The Em-   
perour Julian, commonly called the Apo-  
state, because after having been educated  
in the Christian religion he turned Heathen,  
about three hundred years after the de-  
struction of Jerusalem, formed a scheme  
of rebuilding the temple. Filled with en-  
mity against the people whom he had  
forsaken, but still desirous to avoid the  
scandal of open persecution, he tryed  
every method to humble the Christians,  
and root out their religion. Knowing †  
the aversion of the Jewish people to Chri-  
stianity, he sent for some of their chief  
men, and asked them, Why they did not  
sacrifice? They answered, because they could  
sacrifice no where, but at the temple at Je-  
rusalem, and now they had none. He  
bid them take good heart, and engaged to  
build a temple for them. And †† accord-

G 2

ingly

† See Socrat. H. E. l. 3. c. 20. Sozom. l. 5. c. 20.  
Theodoret. l. 3. c. 20. Cbryse. T. 1. p. 580. 646. &c. T. 2.  
p. 574.

†† —Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam tem-  
plum, quod post multa et interneciva certamina obsidente  
Vespasiano posteaque Tito aegre est expugnatum, instau-

rare

## 52. *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. ingly gave full powers and strict orders

II. for that purpose to proper officers, allotting likewise large sums out of the public revenue. But when materials were provided, and they were about to lay the foundations of the intended temple, the workmen were terrified, and some of them scorched by frequent and repeated eruptions of fire from the earth; as is related by divers authors, who lived at the time, or near it; and particularly by a Heathen historian of good credit, and a friend and admirer of Julian. Undoubtedly such a design was formed and defeated.

If they,\* who lived about three hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem, thought this captivity of the Jewish people long: how much more may we, when it is now, not only three hundred, but

rare sumtibus cogitabat immodicis. Negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiocheni, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro Praefectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciae rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum. Hocque modo elemento destinatus repellente, cessavit inceptum. *Amm. Marcel. l. 23. c. i.*

\* *Chrysostom, and others.*

but thrice three hundred years, and almost double that number, since the commencement of it?

DISC.  
II.

If they who lived above a thousand years ago observed the long continuance of this dispersion, as exceeding every thing of the like kind that had befallen this people, certainly the continuance of it to this day must appear very extraordinarie and affecting.

5. *The subsistence of the Jewish people to this time affords an attestation to divers things, upon which some evidences of the Christian religion depend.*

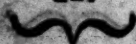
For hereby all are assured of the antiquity and genuinnesse of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. These are received by them, and read in their synagogues. And they allow, that therein are contained promises of a great and eminent deliverer. None therefore can pretend, that the Scriptures, so often appealed to by Christ and his Apostles, are forgeries of Christians.

Possibly,



DisC.

II.



Possibly, we are not aware, how great an advantage we have, in this respect, from the subsistence of the Jewish people, and their synagogue worship, where the Scriptures of the Old Testament are often read.

It is true, the time of Christ's coming seems to have been a time of greater knowledge, and more general commerce, than that of the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage. But a variety of evidence for important facts, such as the coming of Christ, and his teaching among the Jews, is not to be despised, but thankfully accepted. And if the Jewish people had been extinguished soon after the coming of Christ, and the planting his religion in the world; some things might have been disputed by enemies, which now are uncontestable. Some might have had the assurance to deny, that ever there was such a people in the world, or that ever a nation existed, which conformed to the institutions of Moses. And they might have formed an argument, which would have affected some persons,

sons, little conversant in ancient historie, DISC.  
And our case might have resembled that II.  
of the Jewish people of old, who were  
sometimes obliged to labor in the proof,  
that || they were not expelled out of  
Egypt, but conducted thence under the es-  
pecial care of a powerful providence and  
protection.

But here possibly a scruple may arise  
in the minds of some. And they may  
say: If the subsistence of the Jewish peo-  
ple be so much to the advantage of the  
Christian religion, might it not have been  
as well for them to have continued in  
the land of Canaan, maintaining the an-  
cient form of their commonwealth, and  
living in power and splendour, as in some  
times of old?

I answer: It was not fit.

1.) For, *their rejecting the Messiah must  
require some tokens of divine resentment and  
displeasure.* If Jesus wrought such mira-  
cles,

|| See *Josephus at the end of his first book against Ap-  
pion, and compare Tacitus, Hist. book v. near the be-  
gining.*



DISC. cles, as are recorded in the Gospels, and  
 II. was crucified by the Jews; and if his Apo-  
 stles preached in his name, and were  
 abused, as the historie of the New Te-  
 stament relates: it was highly proper, that  
 after waiting to be gracious God should  
 send remarkable judgements upon them, if  
 they repented not: which they did not,  
 but went on encreasing in wickednesse;  
 as we are assured by Josephus, and other  
 historians.

2.) *It was by no means fit, that the  
 ancient power of the Jews should be conti-  
 nued to them, considering their rejection of  
 Jesus, and their enmity to them that be-  
 lieved in him.* The opposition they would  
 have made to the followers of Jesus, the suffer-  
 ings they would have brought upon them,  
 would have been insupportable by human  
 nature. By the severest persecution within  
 their own territories, and by solemn and  
 powerful ambassies into foreign parts, dis-  
 paraging the disciples of Jesus and their  
 principles, they would have extirpated  
 them, as soon as they were risen up. We  
 may clearly collect as much from the  
 afflictions



afflictions and sufferings, they actually brought upon the Apostles and other disciples of Jesus; though their authority and influence were greatly restrained by the superior power of the Roman Empire. DISC. II.

3.) *If the Jewish nation had continued to subsist in their former power and splendour, some evidences of the truth of the Christian religion had not been so cogent, as they are.* For now the temple, built after the return from Babylon, where the promised Messiah was to appear, is in ruins. Therefore he is already come. The Jewish tribes and families are confounded, and it is impossible, any Messiah should arise now, who can be known to be of the tribe of Judah, and the familie of David. In a word, if the Jewish commonwealth and temple still subsisted, all the preceding arguments, taken from their afflictive circumstances, would be weakened. But that is neither for their, nor our benefit. That it is not for ours, is manifest. Nor is it for theirs. For it is conducive to their best interest, that the evidences of Christianity should be strong and affecting;

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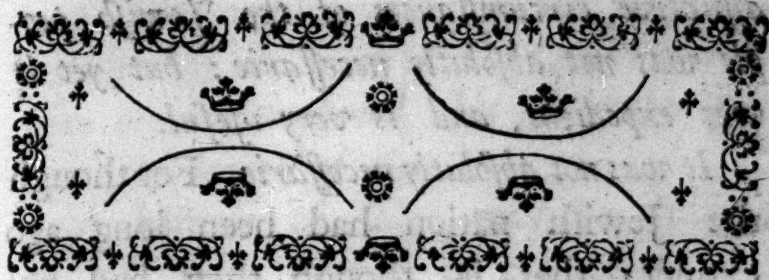
that

58 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. that they may be provoked to jealousy,  
 II. and all Israel may be saved; that is, that  
 the prejudices, which they are so apt to  
 indulge, may be weakened and removed;  
 and that all who can be persuaded, may  
 be disposed to embrace the truth as it is in  
 Jesus, and receive him as the Messiah,



R O M.



## ROM. XI. II.

*I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentils, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

III.



BEFORE I conclude **Disc.**  
this argument I choose **III.**  
to mention a few re-  
marks and observa-  
tions, which I hope may be of some use.

*I. The argument afforded us for the truth of our religion from the subsistence and*



DISC. *afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people was not absolutely necessarie: but yet it was expedient, and is very useful.*

III.

*It was not absolutely necessarie.* For though the Jewish nation had been long ago extinct; that is, though they had not now been a distinct people, but had been lost and mingled with other nations, so that no remains of them had been now observable, following any of the ordinances of the law of Moses; yet we should have had sufficient evidence of the truth of the Christian religion, or that Jesus is the Christ, and his doctrine from heaven. This we could have been assured of from our Lord's character, the excellence of his principles, his miracles, his resurrection, and other particulars, well known, and formerly mentioned.

But yet this argument, from the being and afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people, *was expedient, and is very useful*; as abundantly appears from the considerations, which have been insisted on in the discourses upon this subject.

2. We may likewise observe, that *some* DISC.  
III.  
*evidences of the truth of the Christian religion are not weakened, but do rather gain force by length of time.*

A historie of facts may be thought to lose some degrees of credibility in a long tract of time. And therefore it might be feared, that the evangelical historie might some time suffer upon that account. But indeed it is so circumstanced, and has in it so many internal characters of truth, and is so supported by external testimonies of various kinds, that it's credit must remain to the latest ages inviolable.

However it is sufficient, that this kind of evidence remains as it is. But then some other evidence advances and gains strength by time.

Christ assured Peter, that he would build his church upon a rock, and *that* Mat. xvi.  
18.  
*the gates of hell should not prevail against it.* The longer Christianity has a being in the world, the fulfilment of that promise is the more remarkable, and the foreknowledge of Christ the more conspicuous: especially considering what oppositions of various kinds, in all ages, are made against this



## 62 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

DISC. this doctrine; some by force, and some

III. by art and sophistrie: and considering likewise the weaknesse and inconstance of mankind, and that some, who in name are friends, weaken the interest they profess to uphold.

Mat. xxvi. 6.—13. When a certain woman, not long before our Lord's removal out of this world,

opened a very precious vessel of ointment, and poured it upon his head, some had indignation, and seemed to think it too great and expensive a mark of respect. *But he answered them: Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also that which this woman has done be told for a memorial of her.* And every time this portion of Scripture is read, especially in late ages, it establishes the belief of our Lord's great character.

Jesus often spoke of many coming from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; that is, to || partake of the privileges of the gospel, and the blessings of the Messiah's

|| See *Whitby upon Matth. viii. 11: 12.*



Messiah's kingdom. So long therefore as there are Gentils in the world, who thankfully embrace the gospel, this declaration is fulfilled. And the longer it is, since these words were spoken, the more are they verified. And every accession to the church of Christ from among ignorant and darkened Gentils is a fresh confirmation of the truth of his doctrine.

The dispersion of the Jews, the longer it lasts, still more and more does it strengthen the evidences of the Christian religion. It is the more remarkable. It is a plainer and a more affecting token of divine displeasure against them. The greater assurance does it afford, that the Messiah is already come. And the more impossible is it rendered for any man to prove himself of the tribe of Judah, and the familie of David, whence the Messiah was to arise. For these reasons their present dispersion is prolonged. And may it be duly attended to by all, to whom the consideration of it may be of use!

DISC.  
III.

3. *These things ought also to be considered, as warnings to us.*

Rom. xi. 17.—23. Paul, the Apostle more especially of the Gentils, fails not to make this use of the argument he is upon. *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatnesse of the olive tree, boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then: The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest he spare not thee.*

In the subject we have been treating of there is not only an argument for the truth of our religion, but likewise an admonition to us to take heed to ourselves. For from us too the glorie may depart, if we emprove not our privileges. The seven churches of Asia in the Revelation, were warned, and most of them threatened with the removal of their candlestick; unless

unless they speedily repented, and did the first works. Many Christian churches, planted by Apostles of Jesus, and watered by their fellow-laborers, have fallen to decay and ruin. The name and title of Christian will not save particular persons in the day of judgement. Nor will the name of Jesus, or Christian, alone, secure churches and societies in this world. There should be not only the leaves of a fair profession, but also fruits of love and peace, and all the branches of righteousness and true holiness. Christians should have heavenly minds, and their lives should be adorned with acts of meekness, patience, self-denial, and zeal for each other's welfare. With such Christ will dwell. They honor him, and he will honor them with a distinguished care and protection.

4. *From this argument we may be able to form some judgement concerning the general conversion of the Jews.* It is not a likely thing. If ever it is to be, there does not appear good reason to think it nigh.



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DISC. *It is not a likely †† thing, considering,*  
 III. *that their prejudices are still very great*  
 ~~~~~ *and strong, and have been so all along*  
from the begining; notwithstanding the
great care of the Apostles of Jesus, and
other zealous preachers of the gospel, to
remove them.

If ever there is to be a general conversion of the Jews, there is no good reason to think it *near at hand*. The advantages afforded to believers in Jesus as the Christ, from the dispersion and afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people, in their argument for the truth of their religion, lead us to this apprehension. So long as there remain great numbers of Gentil people unconverted to the faith of Jesus, who are strangers to God and his Christ; so long as there is, and is likely to be, a strenuous opposition made by many, several ways, against the Christian doctrine; so long, it is likely, the Jews will remain, and continue to be a distinct people, scattered abroad upon the face of the earth: forasmuch as their subsistence in that manner tends mightily to awaken men, and to con-

†† See *Lightfoot's Works*, Vol. i. p. 375. 376.

confirm and strengthen divers arguments for the truth of the Christian religion. Disc.
III.

Nor is there any injustice done them herein. As they at first generally rejected Jesus, they were justly rejected and cast off as a people. But still, by the faith and reception of the Gentils, they are called upon and excited to believe in Jesus. And whenever any of them are awakened, and convinced, and converted, they shall be accepted.

St. Paul's argument in this context leads us into this way of thinking. *Have they stumbled, that they should fall? By no means. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentils, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

And his words at the twenty-fifth verse of the chapter may be reckoned strong to this purpose: *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mysterie, lest ye be wise in your own conceit; that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulnesse of the Gentils be come in: that is, as an admired expositor paraphraseth the verse: " For * to prevent your be-*

I 2

" ing

* Locke upon the place.

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DISC. "ing conceited of yourselves, my brethren,
 III. "let me make known unto you what has
 "been yet undiscovered to the world; that
 "the blindnesse, which has fallen upon a
 "part of Israel, shall remain upon them but
 "till the time come, wherein the whole
 "Gentil world shall enter into the church,
 "and make profession of Christianity."

This may be the thing intended by our
 Luke xxi. Lord, when he says: *And Jerusalem shall*
 24. *be troden down of the Gentils, until the*
times of the Gentils be fulfilled.

As for St. Paul's words at the twenty-
 sixth verse, they are understood by some
 in this manner: *And so all Israel shall be*
saved: "And ** so all Israel shall be con-
 "verted to the Christian faith, and the
 "whole nation become the people of
 "God:" that is, when the fulnesse of
 the Gentils is come in.

But I rather think the meaning to be:
 "In this way, according to this method
 "of divine providence, all † good and
 "well-

** Locke, as before.

† Πάντα δὲ Ἰσραὴλ καλεῖται πίεγοντας, ἢ ἐξ Ἰουδαίων
 ἢ ἐξ ἔθνων, τὴν φυσικὴν συγγένειαν πρὸς τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἔχοντες, ἢ
 ἐξ ἔθνων, κατὰ τὴν τῆς πίστεως εὐγένειαν αὐτῷ συναπτόμενοι.
 Theodoret. in loc. T. 3. p. 91. D.

“ well-disposed men, both Jews and
 “ Gentils, *will be saved*; that is, will be
 “ brought into the way of salvation,
 “ taught by the gospel; or, will embrace
 “ the means of salvation, proposed therein;
 “ the Jews being all along provoked to
 “ emulation by the Gentils, and the Gen-
 “ tils being confirmed in their faith by the
 “ circumstances of the Jewish people.”

However this seems evident, that as in
 past ages the Jews had been of great ser-
 vice in upholding religion in the world,
 and from them at length it was brought
 to the Gentils; so, if in the end the Jews
 are converted to the faith of Christ, it
 will be through the Gentils; and proba-
 bly, upon some more general conversion
 of them than has yet been. So says St.
 Paul: *For as ye, Gentils, in time past have
 not believed in God, yet now have obtained
 mercie through their unbelief: even so
 have these also now not believed, that
 through your mercie they also may obtain
 mercie.*

And possibly, we may now perceive,
 that some notions concerning the conver-
 sion of the Jews are false and groundless,
 or

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DISC. or at best doubtful and uncertain. For

III. some imagine, that upon their general conversion to the Christian faith, they will be established again in the land of Judea, and that Jerusalem, with it's temple, will be rebuilt with great splendour and magnificence.

But ++ that supposition is lyable to many difficulties and objections. Should their ancient polity be restored, and they be a distinct people in the land of Israel, separate from all the other people of the earth? The || gospel revelation does not encourage

++ See the sentiments of Origen, and Chrysostom, and others, in Grotius upon Luke xxi. 24. And see Lightfoot's Works, Vol. i. p. 375.—377. and p. 737. 738. What was Eusebe's sentiment upon this point, may be seen in his Commentaries upon the Psalms, not published, till since the time of Grotius. Διδάσκοντες ευχεσθαι τυχεῖν τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν συναγωγῆς, ἢ ἥδη ποτε τῆς διασποράς ἀπαλλαγέντες ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συναχθῶσιν ὅπερ Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν φαντάζονται μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ, ἐπιστάντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἡλειμμένου. ἡμεῖς δὲ κ. λ. Euseb. in Psalm. 105. al. 106. ψ. 47. 48. p. 690. Edit. Montf.

|| “ —Not that Jerusalem should be built again, when “ the fulness of the Gentils is come in, which the Jews “ conceit: nor that then the Jews should be unblindfolded, “ and become a gospel-church, as the Gentils had been. For “ what a strange world does such a supposal imagine? And “ how often does the gospel gainsay such distinctiveness “ and peculiarity?” Lightfoot. Vol. i. p. 377. The same author

encourage such a state of things. And **Disc.** therefore it is not reasonable to expect, **III.** it should be brought in by extraordinary interpositions of providence, under the dispensation of the Messiah.

Should they sacrifice again, as in times past? The law of Moses is no longer in force, and the sacrifices appointed therein are below the dignity of the gospel institution.

Moreover our Lord plainly declared, that all distinctions of places should cease under the gospel; and that worship would no longer be peculiarly acceptable at Jerusalem, or any other city.

The continued subsistence of a large body of the Jewish people in several parts of the world and the present desolation of their countrey, or the small number of inhabitants therein, are thought by some to amount to a strong argument, that they shall themselves return thither, and take possession of it again. But from what has been now sayd it appears, that the forementioned state of things answers very

author says, "That the calling of the Jews shall be in
"the places of their residence among Christians; and
"that their calling shall not cause them to change place,
"but condition." p. 738.

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DISC. very valuable ends and purposes; though
 III. the Jewish people should never be rein-
 stated in their ancient inheritance.

It is likely therefore, that whenever there is a general conversion of the Jews to the faith of Jesus; they will become Christians indeed, and their fondnesse for the rites of the Mosaic law will cease: that they and the Gentils may become one people, and one sheepfold under Christ, the universal Lord of the Church, the Saviour, and the Bishop of souls.

Such an event we have good reason to wish and pray for, that the fulnesse of the Gentils may be brought in, and that then the blindnesse, which in part has long happened to the Jewish people, may be entirely removed.

In the mean time we should both labor for the conversion of ignorant Gentils, and do what lyes in our power to provoke the people of the Jews to jealousy by the simplicity of our worship, the purity of our faith, and the goodnesse of our lives. †

5. *We*


† I have not denied, that there will be a general conversion of the Jewish people. Nor would I be understood to be positive, that they shall never return to the land of Canaan.

5. *We must be hence induced to admire the exceeding riches of the wisdom, and goodnesse of God, who has graciously afforded mankind in all ages helps for knowing the great truths of religion.*

God ever spoke to all in the voice of reason. When that was not duly attended to, and the danger of universal ignorance became great; he separated a familie, that of Abraham, from the rest of the world; and of a part of it he made a great nation, to whom he gave a law; who thereby were set up as a lamp upon a hill, to lighten the world around them. And among them, by frequent interpositions of his wise and powerful providence, religion was maintained, and they were kept a distinct nation, enjoying many privileges, until the Messiah came, and religion was spread far and wide in the
K nations

Canaan; though I have mentioned some difficulties, attending the supposition. And if indeed they are some time not only to be converted, but also restored; I am persuaded, that their restoration will be accomplished in a manner becoming the Divine Majesty, and that all people will joyce therein. I am moreover of opinion, that if ever this be brought about, their worship thenceforward will be entirely spiritual and evangelical.

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DISC. nations of the earth, according to promises made long before. And then the
 III.  Jews generally rejecting that blessing, God cast them off from being his people, as they had been, and poured down upon them tokens of his displeasure: yet not destroying them utterly, and making use of them, even under afflictions, to support the truth of his Son's mission and authority, whom they had crucified.

Nor is there herein any injustice, or unkindness, as has been often observed in these discourses. For still they are provoked to jealousy by those who are taken in their room. And in this respect they now enjoy an advantage, with regard to religion, beyond what the Gentils had formerly. For then it was the nation of the Jews only to whom God was known, and many of the nations of the earth were remote from them. But the unbelieving Jews for the most part live among, or near the followers of Jesus, and have better opportunities to inform themselves of the principles of their religion, than the Gentils had of old to know that of the Israelites.

And

And the wisdom of divine providence Disse,
III.
in the former and the later dispensation is admirable, though above our full comprehension: As the Apostle observes at the end of this chapter, addressing himself to Gentil Christians: *For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercie through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercie they may obtain mercie. For God has concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercie upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? or who has given unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To whom be glorie forever.*

6. We may hence conclude, that known Acts xv.
unto God are all his works from the begin-^{18.}
ing. It is an observation of St. James at
the council of Jerusalem.


DISC. We may infer from the event, that
III. God foresaw from the begining the general apostasie of mankind. And when he called Abraham, and separated him to himself from the rest of the world, he foresaw all the consequences of that gracious purpose and choice: that religion would be in some measure upheld in the world, till the Messiah came; and that when he was come, after the space of many ages from the time of the first promise concerning him, the various ordinances of positive appointment, delivered to the Jews by Moses, which had been of use to preserve them in the land of Judea from mixing with their idolatrous neighbors, till he came, would likewise serve to keep them a separate people, wherever they lived, for a long succession of ages, to bear testimonie to his ancient covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and themselves: whilst still they would have opportunities of knowing the religion of the Messiah, and whenever their hearts should be touched, they might be again received, and partake in all the blessings of his kingdom.

7. It may be reasonably supposed, that *it will be delightful in the heavenly state to know and observe the various methods of divine providence, relating to his creatures, in the world where we have lived; particularly to observe the manifold designs of wisdom and goodnesse with regard to the concerns of religion.*

A wise and discerning person has now great delight and profitable entertainment in reviewing these works of divine providence, as recorded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. But the discoveries in a future state may be much more full and compleat, and consequently more delightful. We may then see the overspreading deluge of ignorance in some places and ages, the wonderful steps by which light was restored, and all the virtue of the instruments raised up by God, and employed by him; the faithful and disinterested zeal, with which they served God, and promoted the welfare of their fellow-creatures; and how even afflictive events subserved beneficial designs.

But

DISC. But this review of things will not be

III.  pleasing and comfortable, except in a state of ease and happineſſe. For ſuppoſing any ſuch extenſive knowledge in regions of deſpair and miſerie; it could not alleviate, but muſt aggravate the diſtreſſe. It would not be ſatiſfaction, but vexation for any one, finally and juſtly rejected of God, to look back on the long ſpace and numerous periods of time, and obſerve the kind provisions made by the divine being for the illumination and ſalvation of men. For ſuch an one, I ſay, to ſurvey the ſcenes of divine providence, in ſeveral ages, and obſerve the time and place where he was fixed, having many advantages afforded him, and more in his power; but all abuſed, or neglected: whiſt ſome others, leſs privileged, acted diſcreetly, honored God, and laid the foundation of future happineſſe: to ſuch an one this knowledge would be tormenting and vexatious.

But though ſuch extenſive knowledge ſhould not be the portion of thoſe who are finally ſeparated from God, there will be remembrance of things paſt; what
men

men have done, or neglected to do; what means of knowledge were afforded them in this world, what convictions they had of duty, what helps they enjoyed for securing a virtuous conduct, and strengthening them against temptations; and how they failed to improve those many advantages.

How piercing must it be in the place of torment for a descendent of Abraham, who lived in the time of our Lord, to recollect the gracious words he heard from his mouth: that though Jesus taught in the streets of his city, and in the most winning manner promised everlasting life to such as believed in him, and obeyed him: and though he performed numerous miracles, healing and beneficial, suited to the goodness of his doctrine, and tokens of inexpressible mildness and benevolence; yet he despised and abused this amiable person! And though he knew, the Prophets had spoken of a great deliverer to arise among them; and it was the prevailing opinion, that was the very time prefixed for his coming; he would not hearken to him, nor regard him, because of some groundless prejudices, and

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DISC. too strong an affection for worldly possessions and enjoyments.

III.

In like manner, for certain, to others also the recollection of religious privileges, not improved, will be matter of torment and vexation.

Prov. i. 25. 30. Children of pious parents, who *set at nought all their counsel, and will none of their reproof!*

Servants, who are averse to the order and restraint of religious families, and offended at daily devotions, and frequent readings of the Scriptures or books of piety; and choose the habitations of the wicked, where there is not so much as a form of godliness, or an appearance of religion; and prefer the companie and manners of the dissolute, who are a reproach to human nature!

A Christian, partaking in all the ordinances of the gospel, yet acting contrarie to the obligations he is under!

A minister in God's house, shewing to others the way of salvation, but not walking in it himself!

How grievous must the recollection of such advantages be hereafter, if finally abused

abused and disregarded! No consolation DISC.
can be given to men then. The sad re- III.
flection on their own follie will be un-
avoidable and incurable.

May we therefore be wise to know
and mind the things of our peace now,
in this our day. Let us secure time for
serious reflections on our conduct and our
advantages. Let us compare our light
and knowledge with our actions and pur-
poses. For between these there ought
to be an agreement. Where much is
given, much may be expected. *And the* Luke xii.
servant, who knew his lord's will, and did ^{47.}
it not, will be beaten with many stripes.

These are certain truths. And these
things will some time afford a pleasing
and comfortable, or an afflictive and sor-
rowful recollection and remembrance. It
is an awful and awakening observation of
our Lord: *This is the condemnation, that* John iii.
light is come into the world; and men loved ^{19.}
darknesse rather than light, because their
deeds were evil. If any of us should
perish, have we not reason to dread this
aggravated condemnation? For we must be
sensible, we have had sufficient instruction

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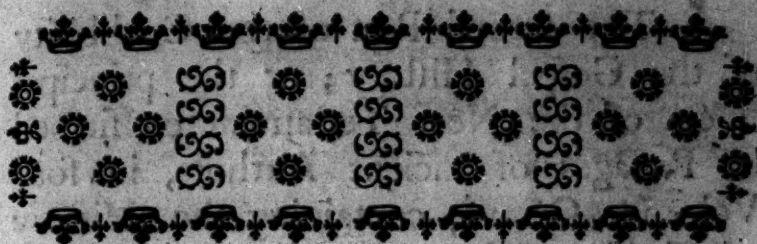
DISC. to assure us, that *things above* are pre-

III. ferable to *things on this earth*; and that

Col. iii. 2. nothing ought so to divert, or engage us, as to prevent our laying up to ourselves treasures in heaven: and that we ought so to order all our present concerns, and the whole of our conversation, as may best promote our most important interest, the everlasting salvation and happineſſe of our souls.

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